

PART I - ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

12IA4

The signatures on the first page of this application certify that each of the statements below concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR) requirements is true and correct.

1. The school has some configuration that includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even K-12 schools, must apply as an entire school.)
2. The school has made adequate yearly progress each year for the past two years and has not been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years.
3. To meet final eligibility, the school must meet the state's Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) requirement in the 2011-2012 school year. AYP must be certified by the state and all appeals resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum and a significant number of students in grades 7 and higher must take foreign language courses.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2006.
6. The nominated school has not received the Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010 or 2011.
7. The nominated school or district is not refusing OCR access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
8. OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
9. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
10. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

All data are the most recent year available.

DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district 9 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 (per district designation): 1 Middle/Junior high schools
1 High schools
0 K-12 schools
11 Total schools in district
2. District per-pupil expenditure: 9876

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

3. Category that best describes the area where the school is located: Small city or town in a rural area
4. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 3
5. Number of students as of October 1, 2011 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total			# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	12	8	20		6	0	0	0
K	17	12	29		7	0	0	0
1	8	17	25		8	0	0	0
2	11	14	25		9	0	0	0
3	15	15	30		10	0	0	0
4	15	13	28		11	0	0	0
5	15	16	31		12	0	0	0
Total in Applying School:								188

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the school: 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
0 % Asian
2 % Black or African American
1 % Hispanic or Latino
0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
97 % White
0 % Two or more races
100 % Total

Only the seven standard categories should be used in reporting the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.

7. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2010-2011 school year: 2%

This rate is calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

(1)	Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2010 until the end of the school year.	2
(2)	Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2010 until the end of the school year.	2
(3)	Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)].	4
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2010	188
(5)	Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4).	0.02
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100.	2

8. Percent of English Language Learners in the school: 0%

Total number of ELL students in the school: 0

Number of non-English languages represented: 0

Specify non-English languages:

9. Percent of students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 53%

Total number of students who qualify: 100

If this method does not produce an accurate estimate of the percentage of students from low-income families, or the school does not participate in the free and reduced-priced school meals program, supply an accurate estimate and explain how the school calculated this estimate.

10. Percent of students receiving special education services: 7%

Total number of students served: 13

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional categories.

<u>0</u> Autism	<u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>0</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>10</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>3</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>0</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>0</u> Mental Retardation	<u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness
<u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities	<u>0</u> Developmentally Delayed

11. Indicate number of full-time and part-time staff members in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff	
	<u>Full-Time</u>	<u>Part-Time</u>
Administrator(s)	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
Classroom teachers	<u>6</u>	<u>0</u>
Resource teachers/specialists (e.g., reading specialist, media specialist, art/music, PE teachers, etc.)	<u>4</u>	<u>10</u>
Paraprofessionals	<u>0</u>	<u>6</u>
Support staff (e.g., school secretaries, custodians, cafeteria aides, etc.)	<u>2</u>	<u>4</u>
Total number	<u>13</u>	<u>20</u>

12. Average school student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the Full Time Equivalent of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1:

31:1

13. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Daily student attendance	96%	96%	96%	96%	97%
High school graduation rate	%	%	%	%	%

14. **For schools ending in grade 12 (high schools):**

Show what the students who graduated in Spring 2011 are doing as of Fall 2011.

Graduating class size:	_____
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	_____ %
Enrolled in a community college	_____ %
Enrolled in vocational training	_____ %
Found employment	_____ %
Military service	_____ %
Other	_____ %
Total	_____ 0%

15. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award:

No

Yes

If yes, what was the year of the award?

Southeast Polk Community School District is positioned just east of Iowa's capital city, Des Moines. The district is urban, suburban and rural. It currently includes the northeastern section of Des Moines, the two rapidly growing suburbs of Altoona and Pleasant Hill, the two small rural Polk County towns of Mitchellville and Runnells, and the green rolling hills and black rich farm land between. A popular amusement park, Adventureland, and the state's only horse racing facility, Prairie Meadows Racetrack and Casino, are located in the district. A number of sports and cultural opportunities are close by in this metropolitan area of 500,000 people. Eleven colleges and universities are within a thirty-five mile radius.

Southeast Polk ranks twelfth in enrollment size among Iowa school districts with just over 6,000 students in eight K-5 elementary buildings, a common 6th grade building, a 7-8 junior high, and a 9-12 senior high with an offsite 10-12 alternative program. Until 1963, the town of Mitchellville and surrounding farms supported its own K-12 school system within a two story brick building. It then became, along with several other small towns in the area, part of a consolidated school district, whose 7-12 students were transported to a "modern" junior-senior high in a central location in the newly formed district, leaving only the elementary behind in Mitchellville. Today Mitchellville Elementary is the district's smallest building with 190 students, fully half of whom are eligible for the free/reduced nutrition program.

Within the past three to four years, this little school has moved from its place as the district's lowest to one of its highest performing elementary buildings on state student achievement measures. The district, the building's staff and its parents have put expectations and resources firmly into place that more fully support student learning. What some might once have described as a dying little town, has rallied to the cause of its school. Posters announcing an annual summer advancement program in reading and math open to any and all students K-5 are accepted by the bar owner, the grain elevator, a car repair and an antique shop. A new public library rebuilt in the empty shell of the town's only former grocery has become the school's companion and champion *en cause*. A renewed commitment has enlivened the PTA organization and increased its membership. Students are regularly welcomed into the town's senior center to share activities. The Lions Club has taken responsibility to ensure students have clothing and basic necessities. The principal finds no shortage of volunteers to assist with building projects. A local father organizes and supervises a weekly open gym of evening activities. One might truly inquire whether the town has helped the school OR the school the town? Whichever or both, the "Miracle of Mitchellville" is a good thing. A vitality missing for a couple of decades has returned. Successful schools make for healthy communities. There is an excitement in the air led by the children.

Mitchellville staff holds high expectations for students and for themselves. Excellent student attendance rates hold steady even as the academic bar has been raised. A culture of excellence abounds. The custodian and head cook are as committed to student academic success as the teachers. All respect designated learning time without interruption and have reserved six weeks of summer to participate in the reading/math advancement program. An after-school assistance program (ASAP) targets students who are struggling to meet grade level outcomes, or who just need a bit of extra encouragement to move forward, with one-on-one or small group tutoring and a light healthy snack provided by a nutrition program companion grant. The district provides specialists for reading and math interventions, special education, gifted and talented education, visual art, general music, instrumental music, physical education, library/media/technology, and a full-time guidance counselor for the 190 Mitchellville Elementary students.

Mitchellville teaching and administrative staff has led the district in embracing the practice of explicitly teaching established content area outcomes for each grade level with proven, research-based techniques. They were the first-trained, the first to employ with students, the first to share out with colleagues, and,

the first to be evaluated for doing so. They continue to model best practices with fidelity. The National/Iowa Common Core is alive and well at Mitchellville Elementary.

Our school's mission "to be an innovative, educational organization committed to providing learning experiences of superior quality which enable ALL students to successfully meet challenges now and in the future" is exemplified by a student-centered school and community environment that monitors progress individually, for classrooms, for grade levels, and school wide. Mitchellville Elementary's focus is on teaching and learning in a nurturing atmosphere to support each child with the most exemplary of opportunities.

1. Assessment Results:

A. Southeast Polk Community School District uses a variety of assessments to measure student achievement throughout the school year. A primary indicator is the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS). Iowa schools and students have more than fifty years' history with these tests, which are scored with local, state and national norm comparisons. Students in grades 3-8 and 11 are tested in reading, mathematics, and science.

The state has established a trajectory point each year for grade level reading and mathematics achievement. Trajectory points are state minimums for the percentage of students who score in the proficient range on these tests. Proficiency is defined as achieving between the 41st national percentile rank and the 89th national percentile rank for the intermediate level and at or above the 90th national percentile rank for the high level. These descriptors of student proficiency are available on the Iowa Department of Education's web site <http://www.educateiowa.gov>.

State and local test data are analyzed for the following subgroups: students in each of the federal ethnic distinctions, students who are English Language Learners, students of low socio-economic status, and students with individualized education plans for special education. The proficiency of each subgroup is established between the same percentile ranks as indicated above for all students.

While Mitchellville Elementary School has not, in some school years, had enough students in any of the subgroups for separate group consideration, and therefore no official gaps in student achievement, the building thoroughly analyzes the achievement of every student. This careful analysis and a sincere concern for the academic growth of every child emphasized in recent years has served the school's overall student achievement well.

The proficiency level in mathematics now registers fully at the 90 percents proficient at all grade levels, with corresponding reductions in the mathematics achievement gap between students eligible and not eligible for free/reduced school meals. The building also maintains high testing participation rates.

B. Mitchellville Elementary student achievement is now consistently stronger in both reading comprehension and mathematics. The proportion of this school's students at each grade level who score at the proficiency level and above in reading comprehension is steadily improving into the 90 percents proficient range. Achievement gaps remain in reading comprehension between students eligible and not eligible for free/reduced school meals. Reading is not the great equalizer for students that math is. Broader efforts are underway to counter balance the effects of poverty on early language learning by increasing the interaction between our students of poverty and print.

Three years ago our school was awarded a \$10,000 grant to be used to purchase a collection of leveled readers that would build a book room. Each year since the volume of books has increased to the point where it is now capable of supporting a wide variety of text types and reading levels. Staff can check out sets of six books from this room to be used for small groups to support students at the appropriate reading level. There are high interest books to read "just for fun", books that were selected to enhance comprehension, and books to support literacy in a content area.

Our PTA has purchased entire classroom sets of Kindles. This has been a wonderful differentiation tool. We have been able to expose each student to books at his/her instructional reading level. We know that with each passing year, we are adding to the number of students who are proficient readers and that the reading achievement gap is closing. Our digital learners are now afforded opportunities to engage with

texts using Tag-School Readers, eBooks offered through the library system, eReaders, and tablet devices. Students recently began using blogs to reflect up their learning and discuss classroom topics. Students previously reluctant to write are now enjoying writing for an authentic audience and are appreciating the constructive feedback from peers and teachers. The integration of meeting the students where they are with these devices has been a game changer in improving performance.

Summer training for teachers, counselor, librarian, and principal by district reading and math instructional coaches has prepared them for the summer advancement academy we have created the past three summers as a reading and math curriculum outcome preview of the coming school year for our students. Math skill acquisition and thinking required for mathematics learning and increased reading comprehension in the next grade level are previewed each July and August for students in every grade level at Mitchellville Elementary during summer advancement academy prior to students beginning that grade when school takes up in the fall. We believe this summer teacher training and the K-5 summer academy for students are the hinge pin to our building's turn-around.

2. Using Assessment Results:

Student indicators of academic success such as DIBELS (K-2) BRI (3-5) ITBS (3-5) and CogATs are the driving force of our *annual progress report* and *comprehensive school improvement plan* (CSIP). Professional development decisions result from scrutiny of student scores and indicated areas of concern.

The Basic Reading Inventory (BRI) is administered by classroom teachers to their own students three times each school year as a means of digging deeper for individual student reading needs. Then, based on our study and application of Dr. Sheila Valencia's groundbreaking research, teachers group students for targeted instruction by the six struggling reader types. Throughout the school students are divided into instructional intervention groups. Students are grouped according to whether they are: Automatic Word Callers, Struggling Word Callers, Word Stumblers, Slow Comprehenders, Slow Word Callers, or Disabled Readers.

A collection of reading probes for each grade level's reading outcomes is matched to unit lessons in the Houghton Mifflin series we use. All students participate in the core reading instruction and comprehension skills are revisited frequently throughout the year to continue to develop competency of the skills. A variety of instructional options is available to classroom teachers as they determine which fits best with probe information to support the needs of all learners: guided reading, literacy centers, the daily five, use of robust vocabulary, and writing-to-read instruction.

Learner groups are flexible based on the district assessments and teacher observation. Within the groups teachers specifically trained to do so focus on strategies that address and strengthen the specific needs of each reader type. Classroom teachers work closely with special education resource teachers, Title I reading specialists, and gifted education teachers to ensure proper placement for students reading on level, above level and below level. There has been a building assistance team established who work together with classroom teachers to design interventions and supports for students not making adequate progress.

K-2 math teachers collaborate with a Title I math specialist. They meet weekly to plan lessons that support individual student needs. Daily math lessons are co-taught and there is ample time provided for small group instruction. Based on classroom assessment results designed for each math unit, teachers are able to re-teach strategies not mastered and then to reassess as needed.

With grades 3-5 teachers focus on real life application of mathematics. Pre-assessments are used at the beginning of each unit. Based on the results, student instruction is differentiated to meet individual learning needs. Students who are not unit proficient are provided extra small group support. Enrichment activities have included use of Lego robotics and student-created projects using mathematical processes. Examples are: a baking unit to focus on measurement, photography with iPads of school surroundings

that focus on geometry, Skyping with a partner in New Zealand to compare time zones with math-based skills. Our student centered classrooms are all about high interest, student engagement, and authentic learning and assessment.

Multiple forms of data and student interests guide the instructional methods to fit student needs. The guidance counselor and area education agency supports classroom teachers with everything from behavior charts to morning check-ins to start students' academic day off on the right foot.

The effective teaching strategies we are implementing have enabled us to see building wide growth. Students have displayed increased problem solving abilities and increased reading comprehension as reflected in substantial improvement in both classroom assessments and on standardized tests.

Reports of the work of Mitchellville students and staff toward increased student achievement have been the big story in multiple local, area, and statewide newspapers. Students have been featured in area television stations' human interest stories about what their community is doing to embrace a deepened school/town relationship. Parents and students have collaborated to collect tokens exchanged at a local grocery chain for increased technological tools for instruction. Grants have been applied for. An active PTA and individual parents have promoted what is happening at the school like never before. Students, teachers, building support staff and its principal have prepared numerous presentations to the school's greater community about how the children are doing and about what great learning gains have been made. It is becoming a challenge to determine which comes first, the academic achievement chicken or the community information egg.

3. Sharing Lessons Learned:

During district staff development sessions, teachers from this building are frequently asked to lead presentations about the successes of our building with teachers from other elementary buildings. These presentations to other district staff have included topics across a wide range including: qualities for effective teaching, math methodology for using spread sheets to create timelines and graphs, the use of eReaders in motivating reluctant readers, and increasing classroom efficiency by using technology such as Web 2.0 products.

Staff utilize Web 2.0 apps such as Google Docs to share successful classroom practices with district-wide grade-level team members in other buildings. The enthusiasm of the teachers in our building has been contagious as they enthusiastically share with staff from other locations around the district as they actively serve as members of numerous district committees such as the district Response to Intervention committee, the district technology committee, and the district *Iowa Common Core* committee.

Mitchellville Elementary teachers share with other Iowa schools through their participation in intermediate education agency meetings such as the Technology Infusion Collaborative. We have participated in several site visits which result in collaboration opportunities with other teachers across the state. Mitchellville teachers belong to content specific list serves, wikis, Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, and other social networking sites that provide limitless opportunities to share lessons learned. Our classrooms have used video conferencing tools such as Skype to share with students in other states as well as around the world.

Some of the building's teachers including the teacher librarian and band director are active contributors to specific professional journals. Building staff are also members of content specific professional organizations such as reading associations, technology in education connections, the teacher union, and the PTA where opportunities present not only to share our successes, but to pick up ideas from others as well. Several staff members are currently enrolled in graduate programs at area colleges and universities or are active in alumni associations where they have chances to discuss what has been happening at our building.

4. Engaging Families and Communities:

Foremost among strategies for engaging family and community in our students' success is communication. This school has 100% participation in parent conferences twice each year. Staff uses traditional communications such as phone calls, notes, and newsletters for positive communications and for concerns. We now use websites, blogs, and wikis as well e-mail. These digital communications offer opportunities to present multimedia video information to the community during special events such as back-to-school nights, literacy nights, and grandparents' day where students can share their successes directly.

Our school has deliberately created special bonds with our community. The local senior citizen center enjoys weekly visits from our students who share everything from puppies to poetry with their audience there. The seniors have reciprocated in ways beyond imagination an example being their donation toward school breakfasts for children who otherwise would go without. Another special bond exists between the state women's penitentiary which is located in our town and the adult staff of our building. Staff offer the women a link to the community by speaking at the center about such things as how we are using technology at school. Not only do the female prisoners gain from these experiences, but in return the women share items they have created to our spring fund-raising auction. Partnerships exist with city government, such as the public library and city administrators, and local businesses, such as the chiropractor. Our school has become the heartbeat of the town again.

Regional volunteers have blessed the many underprivileged children in this building taking some of them on their first real shopping experience, ensuring every child has winter snow pants and coats, and offering many a first course in manners and fine dining off campus. The outreach has gone beyond our own community to the state with one individual fund-raising and shopping to ensure no family of the school is left *unblessed* during the holiday season. Local volunteers work with children every day in our building tutoring individual students, reading with students, checking out library books, even trouble-shooting technology problems. These positive community connections and are critical to the successes of this building, and we are pleased that local and regional newspapers have such a good relationship with the building that they cover our positive happenings well throughout the year.

1. Curriculum:

The district has broad comprehensive school improvement goals for curriculum, instruction, and staff development toward balanced literacy, problem-based mathematics, and inquiry science/social studies. As part of the elementary instructional program design, unit plans for each content area at each grade level are used consistently across the district. These unit plans are made following extensive study of current research by volunteer teacher study groups and are based around the National/Iowa Common Core Standards and criteria, as well as the very latest from respected content area professional organizations such as National Councils of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) and of English (NCTE), the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS), and the National Science Teachers Association (NSTA). Instructional materials are purchased by district office based on the recommendations of teacher curriculum review, revision and development committees which have representation from each elementary building and every grade level K-5 for use across the district.

Language Arts: Reading, writing speaking, listening and viewing are included in daily study toward language development. The five big ideas of reading (phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary development, fluency and comprehension) are paired with the 6+1 Traits of Writing to form the foundation of this piece of the daily instructional program.

Mathematics: Numbers and operations, algebra, geometry, measurement, data analysis/probability, and problem solving (the major elements of the NCTM Standards) form the curriculum center of this content area on a daily basis.

Science: Elementary science curriculum includes emphasis on age appropriate science processes (scientific method) and designated elements of the life, physical, and earth sciences at each grade. Following the National/Iowa Common Core, the development of student inquiry is key. In the upper elementary grades four and five, health and human growth and development topics are added to science outcomes.

Social Studies: Traditional elementary social studies foci make up our curriculum in this content area, with special attention to the use of inquiry, primary sources, and authentic student product and performance to demonstrate proficiency with specific grade level outcomes. The district anxiously awaits National/Iowa Common Core guidance to update social studies curriculum.

Physical Education/Wellness: All students participate in a wellness and physical fitness-based program designed to encourage and maintain lifelong habits. Presidential Physical Fitness testing and awards create a way to engage students to improve their speed, agility and endurance. The district has worked closely with a state representative from former President Clinton's physical activity/wellness foundation to further develop its program.

Music: General music includes development of basic music skills, appreciation, history and beginning performance opportunities. General music teachers coordinate outcomes with their colleagues who teach the first piece of our instrumental music (band) program for 5th graders.

Art: Primary and intermediate visual art programs are built around making art and learning about the cultures that foster art around the world. Universal themes are created via 3-D, painting, drawing, print making. A monthly revolving art exhibition graces the building and is shared with district offices and community centers.

In support of its strong instructional program, Mitchellville Elementary curriculum also includes guidance and counseling (classroom and responsive services) and library/media/technology literacy outcomes.

2. Reading/English:

Scientifically based reading research guides our instruction. All students receive 90 minutes uninterrupted explicit core reading in heterogeneously grouped classrooms. The district has adopted Houghton-Mifflin's reading program which is designed to include both small group targeted and Tier II reading intervention within the general classroom setting. "On Top Of" the core reading interventions occur with additional support from reading specialists in both small group pull-out and classroom co-teaching models.

The five big ideas of reading (phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary development, fluency and comprehension) form the foundation of this piece of our daily instructional program. The language arts curriculum meets all learners' needs with a variety of genres, writing supports, and leveled readers to fit the individual needs of each student.

Vital to our strategy instruction for comprehensive reading are think alouds, read alouds, and QAR at every grade level. Mitchellville reading curriculum requires the regular use of predicting, inferring, summarizing, monitoring/clarifying, questioning and evaluating strategies on our before, during and after reading framework. The revival of research focus on the use of informational text and the extraordinary work of Nell Duke has us excited about the newest piece to our reading curriculum, the thorough understanding of the structures of expository text. Mitchellville Elementary has embraced new nonfiction books and the use of classroom sets of e-readers wholeheartedly.

Reading skill acquisition and vocabulary required for learning in the next grade level are previewed each July and August for students in every grade level at Mitchellville Elementary during a summer advancement program prior to students beginning that grade when school takes up in the fall - the power of pre-teaching.

3. Mathematics:

Content standards and benchmarks for mathematics correspond to the National/Iowa Common Core at every grade level. Curriculum centers on the six principles for school mathematics formulated by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM): equity, curriculum, teaching, learning, assessment and technology, and on NCTM's major elements listed above in section 1. The district uses Houghton Mifflin's text series

K-5 in which there are opportunities for differentiation that include both interventions and enrichment.

Following the opportunity to participate in our area intermediate agency's Math Academy several years ago, we revised district elementary mathematics units around a problem base with fact mastery to create a balanced math program.

Further work with math education researchers at the University of Northern Iowa provided guidance for our efforts toward developing authentic classroom math activities for all learners, increasing opportunities for students to communicate about their own math thinking and innovative means to get valuable feedback to our students about their math learning. Daily math classroom routines include a review, mental math exercise, concept previews and thinking with numbers activities. Teachers agree that problem-based instructional tasks (PBIT), basic fact practice, specific restricted use of manipulatives, cooperative group work, estimation activities, meaningful practice assignments (a.k.a. homework), and formative classroom assessments encourage students to be better complex thinkers, problem solvers, and life-long learners

Last summer a district wide math curriculum committee developed new units and classroom assessments that added rigor and relevance. The group collaborated to focus on problem based learning, basic skills development, math vocabulary expansion, and higher level thinking skills.

In math classrooms Wednesday is dedicated to an array of math problem-solving sets developed by grade level teams of teachers as they sought to implement more fully the National/Iowa Common Core. The central goal is to for students to gain automaticity with all kinds of mathematics problem-solving.

4. Additional Curriculum Area:

Science projects in our building include a Build with Bags project. During this PreK-5 project, students study the human impact on our environment, and meet the challenge of making a difference. Students work with the community to recycle plastic waste. The bags are weighed and charted during math before being delivered into the local waste management corporation.

Students needing enrichment participated in a robot league. The league focused on communication, collaboration, and problem-solving. Students researched global challenges robots might solve now and in the future, and used high-level math skills to successfully constructed and manipulated the robots through various maneuvers. These students shared their innovation through presentations with other students who are now enjoying this hand-on learning experience as well.

Students are empowered to learn about the impact of weather on our earth through project-based learning units. Based on the essential question regarding the effects of weather, students find their own area of interest to connect to their current understandings. Reading strategies for non-fiction text are modeled for students. Students learn the importance of purpose and audience as they consider presentation options. Among the projects students presented after their research, were time lines, models using various media, multimedia presentations, and interviews. Students are self-directed and motivated throughout the project through the use of rubrics and the infusion of technology.

Younger students studying animals, their abuse, and dwindling habitats, decided they needed to meet this challenge and make a difference. Students were empowered to make a connection with their math outcomes of counting money and brought change from home to count and save. The students then used critical thinking skills and coupons as they scoured ads and decided where to shop. They purchased more than \$100.00 of food for the local Animal Rescue League. The students then toured the league and presented their donation.

5. Instructional Methods:

The teaching/learning picture paints the curriculum as the WHAT and instruction as the HOW. Therefore, the intentional use of specific, select instructional methods is crucial to the delivery of the curriculum. An instructional graphic developed during summer curriculum workshops for teaching staff serves to present, explain and connect these preferred instructional methods to the key words in our mission statement (superior quality, innovative, and ALL).

The graphic's foundation is Marzano's *Dimensions of Learning*, which provides common vocabulary and general expectations for teaching and learning from an outcomes base. Sitting atop the foundation is the first floor, the Carol Tomlinson model for differentiation of instruction. It is only when classrooms are outcomes-driven that effective differentiation can occur, moving all students toward the same outcomes via different routes. Three doors open differentiated learning to students: consultation, collaboration and co-teaching. Problem-based, inquiry, and balanced instructional design lead teachers and learners toward the established district exit outcomes for all students: to be self-directed learners, collaborative workers, complex thinkers, community contributors, quality producers, global participants, and effective

communicators. These long-standing district exit outcomes for students are remarkably similar to the Iowa Core Curricula's 21st Century Learning Skills.

A team of content teachers, Title I and resource teachers, district instructional coaches, teacher librarians, counselors, and administrators collaborate together to ensure best practices based on sound research are implemented.

Every classroom was recently updated into a multimedia learning center with digital projector, digital presenter (document camera), and interactive whiteboard pens. Students with limited life-experiences can better visualize classroom topics as they view a video of a tsunami or hold a video conferencing session with a classroom across the globe. Students are able to manipulate and interact with text and images displayed from anywhere in the room. In addition, robotics are being used to challenge the creative minds of learners.

Online support systems connected to the district website are arranged according to curriculum content outcomes and give parents and students 24/7 access to learning resources. We have found that these technology tools universally differentiate learning and engage learners. All of these teaching methods combine to meet the varied learning styles and intelligences of our learners and have enhanced our student achievement.

6. Professional Development:

Teams of teachers considered masters in his/her field, content area coaches, and administrators design and facilitate the staff development plan. Extensive professional development time is provided by the district, and Mitchellville staff is known among their colleagues as leaders. Several full days of staff development time are planned with one common goal -- *improving student learning*.

Every Wednesday early dismissals allow for both district and building instructional meetings or staff development to practice together and to share. It is important to our building's success with implementation that the principal takes a strong instructional leadership role. We have moved from the old sit and get model, to the kind of professional development that has so impacted our students' academic growth at Mitchellville Elementary.

Our building staff unanimously has volunteered, in addition to these opportunities, to offer intense staff development throughout the year through teacher release time and before school *Tech Tuesdays*. Professional development sessions include work regarding *characteristics of effective instruction* and *Iowa Core Curriculum* that focus on student-centered classrooms and problem-based learning. Tech trainings for using Web 2.0 tools such as Google Docs are included to increase both teacher and student efficiency with collaborative communication and projects. *YouTube* videos of district experts make it possible for teachers to learn 24/7, and review and reflect upon previous sessions as needed.

Peer coaches assist struggling teachers with implementation of successful teaching practices such as jigsaw and tic-tac-toe boards. Correctly implemented these strategies meet the needs of the diverse learners in the classroom and ensure student success. Without the professional development opportunities implemented in our building it would be difficult to research, teach, and implement such strategies.

Training sessions are always followed by coaching/modeling and observation with feedback to support professional growth. Implementation with fidelity is expected. Mitchellville Elementary has undertaken several building level projects to enhance district professional development i.e., Robust Vocabulary, Response to Intervention, Integrating Learning Technologies.

Teachers are also encouraged and paid to take summer *teacher quality* courses, a summer collegial learning program sponsored by the district and paid for with state Teacher Quality funds. Our librarian

and two other faculty members have served as teaching facilitators for these courses. All of these opportunities for professional development relate directly to our student outcomes and successes.

7. School Leadership:

The current principal accepted the offer from the district Superintendent of Schools to move to this building four years ago from another district building with the understanding that he would be leading a turn-around. He and the district Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum/Instruction developed an outline of what needed to happen, and brain stormed options for how to proceed. Then the principal created multiple sets of routes for working with the building's staff, parents, community, and students to create the action plan. The district instructional coaches for math and reading met often and regularly with the principal to design individual ways to assist teachers with specific needs, to observe and to co-teach with teachers, and to lead the summer advancement academy planning and preparation. The principal also sought sound counsel from the district Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources regarding a teacher observation and evaluation schedule and to establish goals for personal professional growth.

The principal and counselor joined forces to make home visits with families whose children had spotty attendance, frequently transporting students to school. This piece has been a full service operation of care and concern for students and struggling families. They have modeled, and staff and community have responded, opening the arms of the school to do whatever it takes for students to become successful. In addition to regular home visits, the principal also set a building expectation that each teacher would make a minimum of one positive parent contact per month for the duration of the academic year. This new expectation was formed to build a strong connection and relationship between home and school.

The building principal established a Building Assistance Team (BAT) to create short term, six week, interventions for students that were below grade level. BAT team members met as a group each Wednesday to collaborate and design effective research based interventions for individual students. Follow up BAT meetings were held six weeks after the initial meetings to discuss the data collected during the intervention. BAT team members saw substantial individual progress during nearly all of our intensive six week interventions. The building leader set the expectation that every staff member at Mitchellville Elementary is a teacher and as a result, everyone in the building contributed to individual interventions. Cooks, secretarial staff, health aids, and school volunteers were all expected to contribute their time during BAT interventions. High expectations for student achievement are led by the building principal but more importantly, these high expectations were delivered by every member of the building team.

The principal has shared the results of the successful BAT interventions with all members of the Mitchellville staff. Mitchellville Elementary adopted a successful culture for learning that stems from the philosophy and phrase on every email the principal sends to staff: "Expect Nothing, Blame no one, Do Something." Current standardized test results show a strong correlation between BAT interventions and increased student achievement.

PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 3 Test: Iowa Test of Basic Skills

Edition/Publication Year: 2001-2002 Publisher: Riverside

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month	Feb	Feb	Feb	Feb	Feb
SCHOOL SCORES					
Intermediate plus High state standards	93	86	41	81	83
High State Standard	11	14	0	12	35
Number of students tested	27	28	28	25	22
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed					
Percent of students alternatively assessed					
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Intermediate plus High state standards	88	82	33	83	
High State Standard	13	9		8	
Number of students tested	16	11	11	12	
2. African American Students					
Intermediate plus High state standards					
High State Standard					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Intermediate plus High state standards					
High State Standard					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Intermediate plus High state standards					
High State Standard					
Number of students tested					
5. English Language Learner Students					
Intermediate plus High state standards					
High State Standard					
Number of students tested					
6.					
Intermediate plus High state standards					
High State Standard					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					

12IA4

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 3 Test: Iowa Test of Basic Skills

Edition/Publication Year: 2001-2002 Publisher: Riverside

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month	Feb	Feb	Feb	Feb	Feb
SCHOOL SCORES					
Intermediate plus High state standards	93	82	59	81	91
High State Standard	7	4	4	8	22
Number of students tested	27	28	26	25	22
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed					
Percent of students alternatively assessed					
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Intermediate plus High state standards	88	64	58	67	
High State Standard			8		
Number of students tested	16	11	11		
2. African American Students					
Intermediate plus High state standards					
High State Standard					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Intermediate plus High state standards					
High State Standard					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Intermediate plus High state standards					
High State Standard					
Number of students tested					
5. English Language Learner Students					
Intermediate plus High state standards					
High State Standard					
Number of students tested					
6.					
Intermediate plus High state standards					
High State Standard					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 4 Test: Iowa Test of Basic Skills

Edition/Publication Year: 2001-2002 Publisher: Riverside

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month	Feb	Feb	Feb	Feb	Feb
SCHOOL SCORES					
Intermediate plus High state standards	93	80	72	100	88
High State Standard	24	8	0	32	4
Number of students tested	30	25	29	19	24
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed					
Percent of students alternatively assessed					
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Intermediate plus High state standards	92	69	71		90
High State Standard	25	15			
Number of students tested	12	13	14		10
2. African American Students					
Intermediate plus High state standards					
High State Standard					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Intermediate plus High state standards					
High State Standard					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Intermediate plus High state standards					
High State Standard					
Number of students tested					
5. English Language Learner Students					
Intermediate plus High state standards					
High State Standard					
Number of students tested					
6.					
Intermediate plus High state standards					
High State Standard					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					

12IA4

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 4 Test: Iowa Test of Basic Skills

Edition/Publication Year: 2001-2002 Publisher: Riverside

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month	Feb	Feb	Feb	Feb	Feb
SCHOOL SCORES					
Intermediate plus High state standards	93	60	72	63	63
High State Standard	14	8	21	16	4
Number of students tested	30	25	29	19	24
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed					
Percent of students alternatively assessed					
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Intermediate plus High state standards	92	54	64		60
High State Standard	8	15	21		
Number of students tested	12	13	14		10
2. African American Students					
Intermediate plus High state standards					
High State Standard					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Intermediate plus High state standards					
High State Standard					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Intermediate plus High state standards					
High State Standard					
Number of students tested					
5. English Language Learner Students					
Intermediate plus High state standards					
High State Standard					
Number of students tested					
6.					
Intermediate plus High state standards					
High State Standard					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 5 Test: Iowa Test of Basic Skills

Edition/Publication Year: 2001-2002 Publisher: Riverside

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month	Feb	Feb	Feb	Feb	Feb
SCHOOL SCORES					
Intermediate plus High state standards	92	96	89	68	85
High State Standard	16	22	33	9	15
Number of students tested	15	27	18	22	27
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed					
Percent of students alternatively assessed					
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Intermediate plus High state standards	83	91		50	
High State Standard	8	27			
Number of students tested	12	11		10	
2. African American Students					
Intermediate plus High state standards					
High State Standard					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Intermediate plus High state standards					
High State Standard					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Intermediate plus High state standards					
High State Standard					
Number of students tested					
5. English Language Learner Students					
Intermediate plus High state standards					
High State Standard					
Number of students tested					
6.					
Intermediate plus High state standards					
High State Standard					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					

121A4

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 5 Test: Iowa Test of Basic Skills

Edition/Publication Year: 2001-2002 Publisher: Riverside

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month	Feb	Feb	Feb	Feb	Feb
SCHOOL SCORES					
Intermediate plus High state standards	88	96	83	64	85
High State Standard	16	22	22	9	15
Number of students tested	25	27	18	22	27
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed					
Percent of students alternatively assessed					
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Intermediate plus High state standards	83	91		50	
High State Standard	17	27			
Number of students tested	12	11		10	
2. African American Students					
Intermediate plus High state standards					
High State Standard					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Intermediate plus High state standards					
High State Standard					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Intermediate plus High state standards					
High State Standard					
Number of students tested					
5. English Language Learner Students					
Intermediate plus High state standards					
High State Standard					
Number of students tested					
6.					
Intermediate plus High state standards					
High State Standard					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics Grade: Weighted Average

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month	Feb	Feb	Feb	Feb	Feb
SCHOOL SCORES					
Intermediate plus High state standards	92	87	64	82	85
High State Standard	17	14	7	16	17
Number of students tested	72	80	75	66	73
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Intermediate plus High state standards	87	80	54	68	90
High State Standard	15	16	0	4	0
Number of students tested	40	35	25	22	10
2. African American Students					
Intermediate plus High state standards	0	0	0	0	0
High State Standard	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Intermediate plus High state standards	0	0	0	0	0
High State Standard	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
4. Special Education Students					
Intermediate plus High state standards	0	0	0	0	0
High State Standard	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
5. English Language Learner Students					
Intermediate plus High state standards	0	0	0	0	0
High State Standard	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
6.					
Intermediate plus High state standards	0	0	0	0	0
High State Standard	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
NOTES:					

12IA4

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading Grade: Weighted Average

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month	Feb	Feb	Feb	Feb	Feb
SCHOOL SCORES					
Intermediate plus High state standards	91	79	70	70	79
High State Standard	12	11	15	10	13
Number of students tested	82	80	73	66	73
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Intermediate plus High state standards	87	68	61	50	60
High State Standard	7	14	15	0	0
Number of students tested	40	35	25	10	10
2. African American Students					
Intermediate plus High state standards	0	0	0	0	0
High State Standard	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Intermediate plus High state standards	0	0	0	0	0
High State Standard	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
4. Special Education Students					
Intermediate plus High state standards	0	0	0	0	0
High State Standard	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
5. English Language Learner Students					
Intermediate plus High state standards	0	0	0	0	0
High State Standard	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
6.					
Intermediate plus High state standards	0	0	0	0	0
High State Standard	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
NOTES:					

12IA4